

# UNDERHILL PLANNING COMMISSION

Wednesday, November 2, 2016 6:30 PM

## Minutes

**Planning Commissioners Present:** Chair Cynthia Seybolt, Carolyn Gregson, Pat Lamphere, Andrea Phillips, Catherine Kearns, David Edson, Irene Linde, Andrea Phillips

**Staff/Municipal Representatives Present:** Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

[6:30] The Planning Commission convened at Underhill Town Hall at 6:30pm.

[6:33] Chair C. Seybolt called the meeting to order.

[6:36] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to approve the September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Minutes.**

Commissioner Kearns moved to accept the motion and Commissioner Edson seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

[6:39] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to approve the October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Minutes.**

Commissioner Lamphere moved to accept the motion and Commissioner Kearns seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

[6:42] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to approve the October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Minutes.**

Commissioner Gregson moved to accept the motion and Commissioner Kearns seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

[6:42] Staff Member Strniste provided an explanation on **why the Planning Commission was unable to go forward with bylaw updates this year**. He explained that there was a thirty-day notice requirement to provide to the neighboring municipalities, which included a summary of the changes, and therefore, given the projected timeline, meeting the thirty-day deadline was not possible. Chair C. Seybolt stated that this would allow the Planning Commission to address bigger concerns that they were unable to address in this round of updates. She continued by **providing a list of some of the areas that have already been addressed** and can be refined and added to by Andrew: cross-reference fixes, section relocations, grammatical fixes, definition issues, re-subdivision, and subdivision over 1500 ft. elevation.

[6:50] A discussion ensued about the possibility of a **special ballot for bylaw updates in November 2017**. The Planning Commission agreed that if there was an election, holding a ballot measure then would be better.

[6:54] Chair C. Seybolt **asked the members of the Commission what their biggest concerns about the bylaws are**. The Commission responded accordingly: Commissioner Lamphere – multi-family housing and making the Regulations equitable; Commissioner Edson – aligning the Regulations with the Road Ordinance and simplifying the Regulations; Commissioner Bergersen – aligning the Regulations with the Road Ordinance; Commissioner Kearns – the Development Review Board's concerns, aligning the Regulations with the Road Ordinance, and more investigation into possible changes; Commissioner Gregson – multi-family housing and aligning the Regulations with the Road Ordinance; Commissioner Phillips – multi-family housing, aligning the Regulations with the Road Ordinance, and home businesses running with the land; Commissioner Linde (abstained due to a prolonged absence); Chair C. Seybolt – the Development Review Board's concerns and overlay districts for the Town's centers.

[6:58] **A discussion ensued about tiny houses, followed by a discussion about accessory dwellings v. temporary structures.** Staff Member Strniste provided an example where a tiny house is being proposed to be used as a temporary structure until a primary structure will be built, at which point the tiny home will be converted to an accessory structure. A debate ensued on the repercussions of allowing this practice.

[7:06] Chair C. Seybolt explained that she thought the **Commission should develop a work plan that would assist them in being effective in updating the Regulations.** Commissioner Lamphere stated that the Planning Commission should provide Staff Member Strniste a policy, and then he could write the Regulation. Concerns were mentioned about increasing staff's workload, which could become too burdensome. Commissioner Gregson stated that the Staff position is there to provide the research and handle a lot of the work, that the Commission is a volunteer board, and that Commissioners may not have enough time outside the meeting to perform tasks.

[7:09] Chair C. Seybolt **suggested that the Commission concentrate on different issues at different meetings,** which would allow the Commission to focus on one issue at a time. She suggested that the Commission look at tiny house regulations of surrounding communities for comparison purposes to help formulate a policy. Commissioner Kearns suggested that the policy should be made after researching tiny house regulations rather than formulate a policy based on opinion. Staff Member Strniste suggested a "test run" of creating a policy, which the test case scenario would be tiny homes, and determine if this is an approach the Planning Commission should utilize going forward. Commissioner Edson stated that he did not know what else could be done regarding tiny homes as the Regulations seem to provide enough flexibility to allow tiny homes. Commissioner Phillips identified that a crux of the issue lied with whether the tiny home was on a foundation or if it was movable. Staff Member Strniste suggested that the Commission may be ill equipped to address the issue at hand. Chair C. Seybolt recommended that Staff Member Strniste send references to temporary structures in the Regulations to the Commission prior to the next meeting to help identify what potential problems exist.

[7:18] **Commissioner Edson suggested that a possible way to expand upon tiny house regulations was to provide density reductions for them.** Commissioner Lamphere identified that this was a type of practice utilized elsewhere called cottage housing.

[7:19] Staff Member Strniste provided an overview about an application in front of the Development Review Board that involved the **issue pertaining to single-family dwellings with an accessory apartment, multi-family housing and duplexes.** He identified that some of the major issues with these designations are the residency requirements, square footage requirement, and the number of dwelling units. He further identified that there are a lot of similarities between a single-family dwelling with an accessory apartment and a multi-family dwelling. Commissioner Lamphere suggested that the Commission look at similar sized, rural communities such as Johnson and Westford, to see how they address the multi-family issue. He added that the accessory dwellings were allowed for economical purposes. Commissioner Edson followed up by stating that he thought the accessory dwelling should apply to detached units only. Chair C. Seybolt concluded that the Commission will need to come up with a policy regarding multi-family housing, for example, considering whether the policy should be permissive only to the extent that the current environment be maintained, or whether it should allow for fundamentally changing the character of Underhill. Staff Member Strniste stated that the Commission may also want to pursue whether the multi-family line item in the use chart should be delineated further.

[7:35] Chair C. Seybolt stated that **the Development Review Board should consolidate their views for when Commission meets with them next.** She continued to state the **Board should provide**



**a synopsis of the overlay district they are proposing, and why it makes sense versus rezoning.** Commissioner Edson stated that he thought the overlay district sounded complicate and is initially opposed to the idea.

- [7:49] Chair C. Seybolt recommended that the **Planning Commission hold the public meetings far in advance to inform and involve residents and to accommodate any adverse public comment.**
- [7:50] A discussion ensued about the **AARP Grant** that was discovered earlier in the summer. Now that the store has been around for a few months, the Commission could determine the type of impact it is having on the community. Chair C. Seybolt suggested that Staff Member Strniste contact the Jericho Planning Staff Member to get her Town's recommendations. Commissioner Phillips recommended that a pedestrian light be installed by Mills River.
- [7:52] Chair C. Seybolt asked if the Commission had **any requests for the regular budget.** Staff Member Strniste stated that he has been looking into a projector and projector screen.
- [7:53] **No other business** was brought to the attention of the Commission.
- [7:54] The Commission will likely have a **quorum for November 16<sup>th</sup>.**
- [7:55] Chair C. Seybolt **invited the Commissioners and significant others to a pot luck dinner at her house on December 7<sup>th</sup> in place of the regularly scheduled meeting, and suggested cancelling the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.**
- [7:56] **Chair C. Seybolt asked for a motion to adjourn.** Commissioner Bergersen moved to accept the motion and Commissioner Lamphere seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

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Respectfully Submitted By:  
Andrew Strniste, Planning Director

The minutes of the November 2, 2016 meeting were accepted this 30 day of Nov, 2016.

  
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Cynthia Seybolt, Planning Commission Chair

